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AUTHOR	Krechevsky, Mara
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ABSTRACT

Project Spectrum is a collaborative research and development project offering an alternative approach to assessment and curriculum development for preschool and early primary education. The project, based on Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory and David Henry Feldman's nonuniversal development theory, emphasizes closely observing children, identifying children's intellectual strengths, and using those strengths as the basis for an individualized educational program. This handbook provides a comprehensive description of the Spectrum preschool assessment battery. The handbook has chapters on each of seven knowledge domains (movement, language, mathematics, science, social, visual arts, music) and a chapter on working styles, describing a child's approach to a particular task. Assessment criteria are based on work with 4-year-olds, but can be modified for 3- to 6-year-olds. Each domain chapter describes the domain, how development proceeds in young children, the range of abilities exhibited by preschoolers, and typical preschool classroom activities and assessments. Each also describes the development of assessment activities and the types of skills characterizing unusual competence in that area. Activity descriptions include information on materials and set-up, procedure and script, scoring, preliminary results from Project Spectrum students, and suggestions for additional activities. Included are observation sheets and an activities calendar to help teachers incorporate multiple intelligences theory into the classroom routine. The handbook also discusses the development of the Spectrum Profile for each student, which is a description of the configuration of a child's intellectual strengths, with recommendations for home, school, and wider community activities. Eleven appendices include sample forms and a parent activities manual. Contains 17 references. (KB)

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